1984
TO
2011

# QUANTA

# MAGAZINE

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# Information on the Association

**Membership of QUANTA, the independent QL user group, is by annual subscription. The Membership Secretary can supply full details. Copies of the association's constitution & annual accounts are available from the Secretary. There is an extensive software library. There are active national subgroups. Details are given in the Member's Guide and in this magazine.**

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# QUANTA Magazine

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## EDITORIAL Sarah Gilpin

As Chairman I am filling in for the loss of our editor for this issue of the magazine and for an additional issue in March. Hopefully we shall be able to find a replacement editor before the April/May issue.

Our retiring editor, John Gilpin, only stepped into the role as a temporary stop-gap that has lasted for a number of years, but is that not always the way for volunteers. His resignation from the Committee is in accordance with the current Constitution for length of service. Everyone will feel the loss of his going and we thank him for all his hard work, both as Editor of the Magazine and as Treasurer/ Membership Secretary.

This issue is the first of Volume 28, but we hope that it will not be the last – a New Editor is required urgently. We have received some interesting articles from a former member returning to QUANTA which I hope everyone will enjoy. The Helpline includes the third part of the zip/unzip guidelines. There is new information from the London Sub-group, so please read that if you live anywhere near London or are just visiting.

This issue of the magazine has a large section of news and a further large section from the Helpline. So it has been decided that an additional issue will be send out in March. The March issue will contain all the information regarding the Workshop/Annual General Meeting on April 16th/17th 2011. Please put this date in your diaries, remember that there will be a dinner on Saturday night. We look forward to seeing you all in April.

## CHAIRMAN'S NOTES Sarah Gilpin

Currently I feel like a spare part to the QUANTA community. It is very uncomfortable to read all the comments on the ql-users list regarding changes required to the QUANTA Constitution while no one has had the courtesy to send these same comments directly to any member of the QUANTA Committee. I, and other members of the Committee, agree that there should be a careful re-reading of the Constitution regarding its relevance to both today's membership and the 21st Century and with a view to removing any ambiguities. It has been scheduled into our meeting in February, but that is not to suggest that we will be making any hasty

changes or decisions. I would like to invite all those who commented on a possible change to come to the AGM workshop in April and we will hold an open forum on the Sunday morning for all attending to air opinions and suggestions. We invite all those interested in writing a new Constitution to send a draft copy to the Committee for review and discussion at the open forum during the Annual General Meeting weekend.

A comment has been made regarding the slow but inevitable decline in the QUANTA income and a suggested solution has been to raise the Subscriptions. Again this is something that has been discussed on many occasions and even added as any other business at an AGM. The general consensus, in the past, has been to leave the subscriptions at £14.00. This no longer covers the cost of producing the Magazine and the other running costs of QUANTA. Committee expenses have been reduced in recent years by holding email meetings and using fewer cars to get to meetings/workshops. With the current Committee largely based in and around Manchester this has been further reduced. Regardless of increasing Committee costs I should like to see some new members on the Committee from the southern half of the UK. Any volunteers?? Therefore the increase to subscriptions is another subject to be discussed both by Committee and at the forum in April, bearing in mind that QUANTA is a non-profit organisation.

I am glad to report that we have received a nomination for a new Committee member, who does not live anywhere near Manchester. This will still leave some vacant places available for volunteers, who may be co-opted onto the Committee if they have not yet sent in a nomination

This year we will send all the Annual General Meeting (AGM) information and the annual reports out as an additional issue of the magazine in March. As we are holding the meeting at a workshop in Manchester we would invite you all to join us for a Chinese banquet on Saturday 16th April. These have been very successful in the past and the place we visit is very obliging regarding dietary requirements. Comment has been passed on the excellent quality of their vegetarian equivalent of crispy roast duck but no comment has been received regarding disappearing napkins. The Committee have decided that on the Sunday morning we shall hold an open forum to discuss a number of topics that have recently been raised. We hope that members from all over the UK and Europe will make an effort to attend, and that those from further abroad will let us have their thoughts by post or email.

## POINTS OF VIEW

## RETURNING TO THE QL SCENE – SOME THOUGHTS

Jean-Yves Rouffiac

I thought I'd write down some thoughts concerning the QL scene as I have been enjoying something of a QL revival recently, most notably as an alpha/beta tester for Q-emuLator for OS X.

Although I have never completely abandoned the QL world (I lurk on the mailing list from time to time and will check out QL sites, especially Dilwyn's every few months), it's certainly true that I have not been doing an awful lot of QL-QLing for quite some years.

Now however, I have subscribed to QUANTA and QL Today and got myself all updated on the emulator front. So where does that leave me, and what do I think of the QL world of today? What follows may accurately be described as ramblings, for which I apologise in advance.

**The QL community**

Firstly, I am very impressed at the continued level of enthusiasm and activity in the QL world. It appears to be somewhat on a par with that of the Acorn RiscOS community which considering how few QLs sold overall is not to be sneezed at. It has been nice to see names I knew from the past, indeed people I had met many years ago, still participating and sharing their thoughts and passion for this venerable piece of technology.

It was also encouraging to note that both QUANTA and QL Today were still active, although the more I read of both and the comments on the mailing list, the more I begin to wonder whether things are not all well between these two organisations? I don't know, maybe I'm reading too much into individual comments etc. Hopefully all is rosy in the QL garden, but as an outsider (sort of) I was surprised to read quite a few negative posts and editorials.

What did surprise me with the 'scene' is how, ahem, how to put this delicately? How "behind the curve" it is with regards the Internet in particular. You really have to be a QL enthusiast to know where to look or understand that things are still happening. Let me give you a few examples:

1. The QUANTA website. I am very impressed by the fact that QUANTA have moved to a CMS (although as a web developer, I'd have chosen another one, heh!). But since it was launched, the news pages have been largely static, and the front page is not a very welcoming affair: no warm welcome message,

no pictures, just lots of information on committees and subscriptions… I would really urge QUANTA to review their design and prioritise other content on the front page: images of QLs, images of the most impressive QL programs, meeting photos (not just links to these, you have to capture browsers' attention immediately) and up to date news. This latter is critical in creating the message that the QL is an actively supported/developed platform. If people are interested, they can subsequently move onto sub pages which describe the committee and the subs etc. Also, the software library really needs adding as well as a page containing the library index.

2. The QL mailing list. A rich seam of QL information, conversations, banter, etc, and yet it is almost completely inaccessible to the modern web user. As an experiment, I asked several of my friends if they knew how such a thing operated on the Web. Not one had a clue. When I explained it to them, all without exception thought it clunky and a poor medium for exchanging ideas. Now, I know I may be treading on toes and causing offence, which is not my intention, but really if the QL community wants to draw in fresh blood, as it seems to want to judging by the numerous posts on this topic, then maybe it's time to move to a more contemporary medium, such as a forum system. Forum software is freely available (e.g. phpBB) and almost all web users are familiar with how they work. They allow easy searching and navigation through topics and categories, allow polls, attachments, linking, quoting, private messaging, etc, etc. Contrast this with a rather Spartan landing page with dire warnings of going off topic and having to have your email publicly viewable. It's all rather late 1990s ;-)

**Software:**

Anyone returning to a retro platform will do so at least partially and in many cases mainly for the software. Here the QL does rather well – not only does it have a plethora of older software available for download, mostly for free, but also it seems that there are still many people developing software for the platform. The only fly in the ointment is the surprisingly high cost of this software. I can't help but feel that maybe if the prices were drastically slashed, then maybe people who look at the QL as a nostalgic and fun hobby such as myself would actually buy some. Having said that, as I am not party to the economics of the QL market, I may be way off base here.

As it is, there is plenty of great stuff available from Dilwyn's site and this really should be a resource pushed to the forefront of any and all QL sites wishing to pass on the message that the QL is alive and kicking. Some of my old stuff is on there even, which is quite fun (although having downloaded and run it, maybe "fun" is not the correct term!)

The one package I would really like to see ported to the QL: a native version of the SQLite relational database system with bindings for SuperBASIC. That would be something special. I have no idea how hard that would be though.

**Hardware:**

I cannot comment too much on this topic, as I have no new hardware or any intention of buying any. My original QL is safely packed up and only gets an outing every 18 months or so. I find emulation a far better bet nowadays. I don't have the desk space for running my collection of old computers natively anyway.

**What next?**

So what do I intend to do with the QL? Certainly it will not be replacing any of my current operating systems as my OS of choice. It is not capable enough and I don't think anyone would try to claim it is.

I had toyed with the idea of writing some software for the QL, but again I have a list of software that I want to write for the Mac, Windows and iPhone that I have not even started on yet. Not to mention all the software I have to write for my clients.

But I do get an almighty retro-thrill whenever I boot up Q-emuLator, so I may be tempted to dust off the old QL coding goggles and give that a whirl. Especially if SQLite were ported, as this would open up a whole host of options for writing data-focused applications. Even if not, there is one thing I may still attempt, as I have been planning to write it for the QL for some, oh, 20+ years or so? I won't say what as I may never get going.

I will be playing native QL games from time to time – I am currently journeying across the seas upon the Beano (that wonderful graphics adventure) and losing yet again to Psion Chess. My sister (a bestselling author) mentioned that she would quite like to write a short text adventure with me (i.e. me doing the coding), so that may happen and if so I would do a QL version too. Mind you, she has been saying this for about 20 years as well…

So, That's probably where I stand on the QL landscape – a former user who loved the QL to bits when it was in its heyday and who will continue to support it in an ad-hoc fashion going forward. The QL has too much of a hold on my geeky brain ever to allow me to break free, and I would not want to anyway.

I'll finish by simply saying "thank you" to all the people who have kept this great computer alive all these years. Your efforts are much appreciated.

## BACK TO THE QL — Lee Privett

As I sat down to write this I wondered where should I start? This experience of returning to the QL scene and was it unique, should I put it in to context and then another thought was that of the phrase "the ramblings of an old man". So my first two points are, bear with me I will get there and this is my take on things as I experienced them, my decisions are personal ones and no way am I saying this is the right way to go, however readers can always observe my experience and comment should they so wish. *I have come back to this paragraph as, chronologically the article became more of an observational rant at the end, so please be advised again, it is my opinion.*

I left the QL scene around October 1988 when sold all my Spectrums & QLs (one was home expanded to 640K), software and subsidiary equipment, this was in keeping with a significant change in career, change in location and home. I purchased an Amstrad PC1640 as this was in keeping with my job and what they were using (yes Microsoft system) however I was thoroughly disappointed with its performance and the software available at the time of purchase and subsequently for the next four of five years. Upgrades and changes in motherboards, drives etc. took me to a 486 based system that I felt finally I had put that fateful decision behind me. As the years rolled by (please stay awake at the back there) seeing my children grow up etc. I was continually frustrated by the leapfrogging of technology vs. software games being played by the 'PC' machine, dogged by viruses and blue screen of death, lockups I had had enough so in January 2008 I opted for an iMAC. Broken free of Bill Gates

# Sinclair QL Re-Releases

# RWAP Services

We have been working hard to safeguard the future of the Sinclair QL through beginning to compile a repository of QL titles.

The repository enables people to see what software was produced for the Sinclair QL and also to be able to purchase working copies when their microdrive cartridges fail. Where we can, we obtain permission from the copyright holder to re-release items on the market.

This has enabled us to bring some of the titles back to the market as well as re-kindle interest in the Sinclair QL and its emulators.

Old favourites brought back to life include:

Jungle Eddi
The Lost Pharaoh
Pengi
Microdeal's Flight Simulator
Microdeal's QL Hopper
Microdeal's The King
Cuthbert in Space

We still retain our existing catalogue , including:

Open Golf
Stone Raider II
Hoverzone
Deathstrike
Flightdeck

All games are available on disk or for use with Q-emuLator on the PC for **ONLY £5 each.**

Microdrive versions also available - £10 each

Visit the QL Wiki for more details on software, books and hardware for the Sinclair QL: www.rwapadventure.com/ql_wiki

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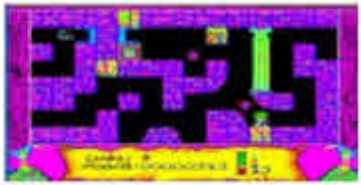
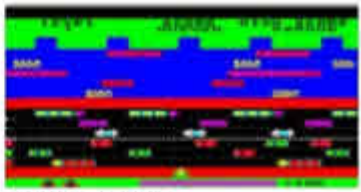
or sellmyretro.com

QL Pengi by Jochen Merz



The Lost Pharaoh by Talent



QL Hopper by Microdeal

The King by Microdeal

Cuthbert in Space by Microdeal

Working to safeguard the QL for the future www.rwapsoftware.co.uk

stranglehold I revelled in a computer again that was 'fun' to use (bearing in mind I teach IT for a living) and although I was never an Apple aficionado before that, I quickly became one if only just to wind-up a number of my colleagues. I went on to get an iPad last year which, for those of you who have not experienced it, it is a multi-touch screen tablet that can run lots of little programs called 'apps', short for applications and can be loosely described as another name for 'terminate and stay resident' programs (ring a bell anyone?).

Nearly there for those of you who haven't given up reading just yet, every weekday I get my daily dose of Apple based gossip from an American website called 'macrumors.com' and they were talking about a new app called iDOS, emulating a MS-DOS system with some clever graphics making it look like an old PC, but they pointed out that they felt it broke part of the software license agreement as an 'app' and that Apple would withdraw it soon, so download it quick before it goes, I did, it went. Playing with the 'app' was amusing but got me thinking about other emulators for the iPAD and I did a bit of searching in the 'app store' and there are a couple that emulate playing of spectrum games, not the Spectrum itself.

OK this then got me hooked in to looking on the web for emulation on my main PC, the Apple iMAC initially for the Spectrum followed by the QL and amongst my searches on Google, up comes 'QUANTA', it was an OMG moment, are they still around?

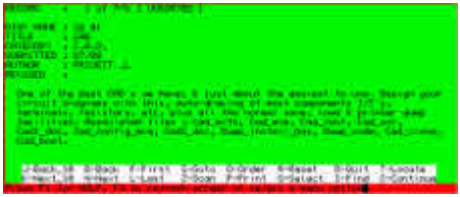
I looked up the website, yes it’s still going and as I read throughout the various pages a flood of nostalgia came through, fond memories of computing and learning a procedural SuperBASIC. that was fun and challenging for me at least at that time. Further searching and I found the link to QUANTA's Library software and an image came up on that page

An image with my name and the program CAD next to it, wow I thought, I forgot I did that. I downloaded the example database found other entries of my attempts and programming, ooh now I'm hooked and need to explore more.

Things started coming back to me:

- Sid Day, a friend who was the software librarian at the time and who sadly died shortly before I left the QL scene
- SuperBASIC, and how much fun it was programming to solve problems
- Turbo Basic, which I thought was great in speeding things up

- Digital Precision, which I didn't
- Toolkit II, couldn't be without the plug-in ROM
- QL User Essex sub group, great for news, meeting people in a pub miles from anywhere in the Essex countryside and seeing stuff every month or so and what people were doing with it



- Window and mouse system for the QL (QRAM) this was a really new thing and I wasn't sure if it had any longevity (ha ha)
- Tony Tebby (bowing towards him), I sent him a program once for consideration, in keeping with the style of the QRAM windowing system, it was a simple notepad (now in the QUANTA library) and caught up with Tony at a Sinclair show in London and asked him about it. He said that he found it interesting but couldn't figure out how when invoking the CLS shortcut (in notepad), the cursor stayed exactly wherever it was on the screen. I found this extremely amusing at the time for some reason, and still do as I deliberately put that feature in. Now, I do not remember exactly why, perhaps I though it was a good idea at the time.

My next step was formed out of curiosity to actually look at my old programs (I no longer had these) and still tinkering with a QL emulator on the MAC. So I decided to join QUANTA again after many years of absence, and purchase a QL off EBAY, try every emulator I could get my hands on and then decide where to go next. Even if you go no further in this article than now, my final advice for anyone travelling down a similar path is read as much as you can before making any decisions on what to do, and then read some more. I have to admit the circumstances I found myself in, in being off work due to illness meant I could do little else but read, and I am not a great reader but I couldn't get enough of trying to catch-up on what has gone on since the late eighties with the Sinclair QL, I really thought it had died a death.

Eventually I settled on purchasing QPC2, so while I eagerly waited for that to arrive I continued to 'tinker'. The tinkering was all on emulation software and finally armed with a QUANTA library CD I set to work in completing some of the projects I set myself. My first lesson was "you have

been spoilt for the last 10 years with Windows and OS X. Get used to typing without making any mistakes again"

Even today it seems to someone new to the QL or someone returning to the QL that the software either commercial or free still relies on a working knowledge of the QL idiosyncrasies such as, the underscore instead of the dot to separate filename and their extensions, the slash instead of the underscore (again) to separate the directories. the fact that it is sometimes unforgiving if you forget the underscore when doing a simple DIR command within a program, and what is it with the COPY command, even WCOPY is frustratingly annoying. Years of typing in 'WORD' having text auto corrected and spaced for you, "i's" capitalised automatically, predictive text in mobile phones has made myself (and I suspect many others) lazy. This has never been highlighted more than when I returned to the QL operating system QDOS, SuperBASIC and the programs there within.

I struggled installing a program for hours making the assumption my system wasn't up to it or that the software was corrupt or I had somehow messed up the floppy disk the software had come on.

What it needed was drive information put in a box followed by the underscore and hey presto all was well with the world, I know that now, but at the time I didn't RTM (read the manual). There is a more common version of RTM used on the forums everywhere but I am not going to use it here.

As I re-learnt QDOS I could not help but make comparisons with the only other well known line based command operating systems and using commands like COPY and DIR for example and what you see on the screen when you incorrectly type things in. So it was frustrating and annoying but I did consider if someone is completely new to the QL, how long before they would give up? I was determined and had the time to do it.

So what did my programs look like twenty years on? Well after the 'euphoria of nostalgia' had subsided a critical look at my programs was one of disappointment. I couldn't get some of them to work straight away as they were written before the common availability of hard drives and fast floppy drives. They relied on the one speed of the QL, the fixed maximum screen size of 512x256 and that there is a delay getting data from Microdrives. Many routines were poorly written in a shortcut/stop gap/Heath Robinson style and of course my observation is all done with hindsight and years of programming in Microsoft's QBASIC, Visual Basic and more recently DarkBasic, perhaps I am being too critical.

After looking at my programs and others in the QUANTA library several things started to form and I have now several projects that I want to realise, some short term, some long term. With SMSQ/E there is a whole load of new keywords to understand and use and I want to revisit some of my old programs and revise for the new options now available. Why? Because I am still enthused by the QL, excited by learning to program in this new environment even if it is considered to be retro. The cool thing about all this from my point of view is developing vertical software, not because it's needed so much but because you can, and you teach yourself by doing so and it stops the brain going to sleep.

But what about the future of QUANTA and the QL. Having read many articles and comments in QUANTA Magazine, QL Today and on websites it is an ongoing concern and to me, it seems to be reaching a critical point.

So here are my thoughts, I work in further education and have been instrumental as a lecturer and manager in running courses based around IT, Media, Music Technology and recently Games Development and Games Design. Computer games are currently the largest growing industry and have been for at least the last five years, yes there are educational

programs that get you a qualification, but as I tell my students this may get you to the door of the interview, after that it is all about you. So where will the students passion come from? Playing games? Unlikely. Where is the grounding of learning or having an interest in computing, in particular programming? I recently spoke to some industry representatives at a Computer Games exhibition in London and what they told me is that they look for more 'all round adaptable' and 'flexible' people not those who can just program in C++ or C#.

So I have to ask 'What is the target audience we are trying to reach that warrants advertising in QL-Today & QUANTA Magazine?'. As I see it the majority of people that see the adverts are already QL people, we need new young blood surely.

Advertising in a national magazine with a wider readership could spark an interested few like me, back to the QL. Mention all the main(?) sellers of software/hardware in the advert there doesn't seem to be that many now, I am sure they would reciprocate in pushing the idea of subscription in their packaging. What about when downloading an emulator of a website people also get a recommendation with all relevant details of QUANTA and QL Today.

But that's only half of it, what about the articles in the magazines? They seem to cater only for longstanding existing QL users who are already knowledgeable. What about more snippets scattered throughout the pages, more 'recently back to the QL' articles, more 'new to the QL' articles, after all who exactly is the target audience, the existing readership only? I wonder how many people have joined QUANTA in the last year as a direct result of advertising in other periodicals? What is the return? If its not working then why not take a different step, a gamble(!), a punt on something new, something different. What else are you going to do with the coffers if QUANTA folds within the next couple of years? Celebrate the QL is 30? 40? 50? please, it's the 'QL users' that are still here and potential QL users that are needed. Unless you have someone prepared to make a significant financial commitment in today's present climate, no one will bring out the all singing all dancing new QL.

To me emulation is and has been the way forward. As for hardware, I do wish somebody would chance their arm with a 'major refit'. After all Apple has shown, especially in the last few years, that you can reinvent a new computing system even if there doesn't seem to be a market for it. In the mean time I suppose it will have to be someone else's hobby, and initially based on a PC systems where parts are plentiful, I wonder if anybody has thought of replacing the OS on a basic 'PC' and doing away with Linux/DOS/Windows altogether, now that would be interesting to tinker around with.

So why are we not targeting the younger generation, why are we not getting 177 QUANTA members writing/saying/emailing at least one letter to their local schools/colleges, councils, newspapers something like:

- Fed up with paying loads of money for the same old games?
- Cant afford to buy any software?
- Want to do something new and interesting with your PC?
- Want to program in a computer language but don't know how?
- Want to get started in the games industry by learning the basics?
- Ignored by the big corporations like Microsoft and Apple
- Never programmed before but want to start now?
- Want to do something just for fun?
- Want to do any of this with other like minded people of all ages and abilities?

With answers like

- Try SuperBASIC on the QL, emulated on your own PC for nothing
- Download applications and retro games, its free!
- Write your own programs and those written by others, its free!
- Play games and learn how they are made, its free!
- Get advice and loads of software to help you, its free!
- Subscribe to a bi-monthly newsletter with help and advice
- Log on to the website "www.somethingcatchytitle.co.uk" for more information
- Get a copy of 'QL on a Stick' (this is the easiest way to do this that I have found)
- Get to learn about the 'computer' and its predecessor that gave birth to the computer games industry here in the UK and internationally.

Perhaps that will be the role of the new editor to push that forward. Well that's my two pence worth, I am still re-learning the QL, have several projects on the go and will be submitting this to the QUANTA library in due course. One final point is, that while writing this article, I suddenly thought that if DOS can be emulated on the iPad and that QDOS can be emulated on a DOS based system then I should be able to get the QL running on an iPAD. Well you can see the result on the web here

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jzK5xU1BbBw

Thanks for reading.

Lee Privett

## QUANTA NEWS Dilwyn Jones

*If you have QL-related news that you'd like us to include on this page, please get in touch with News Editor Dilwyn Jones at*

*news@quanta.org.uk*

### Ser-USB

Adrian Ives has been working on a QL add-on called Ser-USB which plugs into the QL serial ports and uses a USBWiz card to implement an SD card interface and USB ports for the QL. I asked Adrian if he could provide some information about the device, and here's his reply, along with some pictures.

"Development started back in November of 2009 after Tony Firshman mentioned the USBWiz on the QL Users list. I purchased one of the units and set about constructing the prototype with a view to investigating the feasibility of writing a driver. Very early on it was clear that the speed of the serial port would be a limiting factor and I had several e-mail discussions with Tony about the use of superHermes as the best solution to increase performance.

The prototype consists of a black box 12cm x 7cm x 2.5cm containing a USBWiz module, a MAX232 RS232 to TTL level converter chip (to match the levels on the QL serial port to the TTL inputs on the USBWiz) and some supporting logic to drive a pair of RX/TX status LEDs. Later I added a reset button, although it is rarely needed.

Coding began with the standalone File Manager which was working in late December of 2009. This program allowed me to copy files to and from a FAT format SD card or USB hard drive/memory stick. The QDOS file header is stored using the same format adopted by Q-emuLator when it saves QDOS files to Windows media (i.e. storing the header as a 64 byte block at the beginning of the file)

I then started development of the driver by examining the sources for the last QUBIDE ROM build with the intention of stripping out the hardware specific code and replacing it with an "ATAPI Emulator" that would fool the rest of the driver into thinking it was talking to a standard IDE hard drive controller. By late January 2010 the first build of the driver was running but it was unstable. I could not find a way around the problem of

supervisor mode code (trap and scheduler services) invoking the serial driver. I could mount the card, load the FAT and do an initial DIR but anything else inevitably resulted in a lockup.

There then followed a long pause during which my wife and I relocated to Cornwall. Early in 2011 I resolved to dust off the USBWiz project and try one more time to get something working. It was obvious that I had to do something completely different. The ATAPI Emulator approach worked in theory, and almost in practice, but it was messy and I couldn't get around the problem of doing serial I/O inside the driver which led to frequent lockups. Thus the new version of the driver was born. It does all of its I/O in user mode, using a queue to store pending requests which are picked up by a Queue Manager job. The Queue Manager then spawns a Read or Write job to perform the actual communication with the USBWiz over the serial port. The USB device still appears to the system as a normal QDOS device driver, but behind the scenes the way it is doing its I/O is quite different.

Although it sounds simple, QDOS has lots of ways of making this solution anything but! Anyway, on the 1st February 2011, my version 0.02 prototype driver successfully wrote a plain text file of 1.7K to a native QDOS formatted SD Card. After a restart (to ensure that the slave block cache was empty and the data was actually coming off the card), the driver successfully read it back again.

It had been a very long journey but, finally, I was in business!

There is still a lot of work ahead. For a start the FORMAT routine doesn't work yet; formatting is currently achieved by running an S*BASIC utility. There are issues to be solved around the I/O queue filling up when memory is limited, and the whole driver needs optimising to strip out a lot of residual code from the original QUBIDE driver that is now completely redundant. Finally, it will all need testing to destruction in an environment with other device drivers running to identify and resolve any conflicts and performance issues. I do not underestimate the amount of work still ahead!

On the plus side, the current version supports driver-level access through a pipe, allowing commands and enquiries to be sent to it in real time. This will ultimately be thing-based. The driver also has an S*BASIC interface with commands to Get/Set the baud rate, read/write sectors and generally configure the driver.

To get a flavour of the S*BASIC interface here is the current list of procedures and functions that the driver installs:

Procedures
USB_USE: Change the device name of the driver
USB_DRIVE: Link/Unlink drives and partitions
USB_CTRL: Change driver settings for a drive
USB_GETSEC: Read a single sector
USB_PUTSEC: Write a single sector
USB_SETBAUD: Set the baud rate for USBWiz communications
USB_FLUSHMAPS: Force the maps to be written from memory
USB_DEBUG: Set the debug flag to the supplied byte value

Functions
USB_CTRL%: Return the current CTRL setting for a drive
USB_DEVB: Return the base of the driver's variables
USB_BAUD: Return the current USBWiz baud rate
USB_PIPE: Return the Channel ID of the driver command pipe

I will also be producing a pointer environment version of the standalone File Manager (whilst keeping a stripped down character mode version for unexpanded systems).

The disk format should be compatible with QUBIDE hard disk format; the hard disk identifier is "QLW1" and it follows the format of the original QUBIDE. Any software that accesses a disk in the documented way (only through the supplied QDOS traps) should work - albeit slower than a hard disk. Although the way it works behind the scenes is different, it presents itself just like any other QDOS/SMSQ directory device. It even respects the QDOS slave block architecture.

It is my intention, once all the coding and testing is complete, to release the driver itself into the public domain.

Development to date has been carried out using QPC2 running on a Windows 7 64 bit laptop, an Aurora Super Gold Card QL with superHermes, and a bog standard unexpanded QL. The QPC environment has been invaluable for doing high speed edit/assemble cycles, enabling me to combine the best windows tools with those for the QL in my development environment.”

# JOCHEN MERZ SOFTWARE

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**47169 Duisburg, Germany**

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**Screen shots of the driver, running here under QPC2:**

**Loading and mounting USB1 (SD Card)**

**Getting a DIR off USB1_**

**Viewing a file off USB1_**
**(The blocks are TAB characters)**

**Screen shots of the prototype:**

**With serial lead and +5V PSU lead**

RS232 port and Reset button

USB Ports and SD Card slot

Angle showing RX/TX LEDs on side

The electronics (it is a prototype!)

## Wordspot

Wordspot is a little game designed to help improve your typing speed and abilities. Using its 11,000 word dictionary, it selects random words to float around the screen which you have to type in. As you type more and more words it displays an approximation of your typing speed. Alternatively, if you tell it to use numbers, you can practise data entry, using the numeric keypad on your PC-style keyboard if you have one.

As you get better and better, the program increases the difficulty level by having more than one word on screen at a time, to give you more of a challenge.

The program can play games with or without a time limit and has a speed control.

Download the game from:

http://www.dilwyn.me.uk/games/index.html

**Wordspot in action.**

## Lear PCB Design

The latest update to Malcolm Lear's PCB Design program, version 7.18 is now available.

Malcolm says of this latest version, "The biggest change is the option to import bitmap files. It's by far the best way to place a company logo on your board, but usually only implemented on very expensive design packages."

Users of this highly respected free PCB Design program for the QL can download the latest version from

http://www.dilwyn.me.uk/graphics/index.html

## Santa's Maze

A last minute festive game was released on Christmas Eve for you to play while you wait for Santa to turn up. Although released as a festive game, you can play it at any time of year!

Actually, Santa has a problem. Christmas is under threat! Some dastardly person has let the reindeer loose in a maze and scattered some of the children's presents which Santa has to deliver by Christmas day. Santa is beside himself with worry, how can he visit all the children without the reindeer and the presents?

So far, we have ruled out the prime suspect, the long-serving QUANTA Editor and Treasurer, who fled the country over Christmas. We can also rule out the other prime suspect, the QL Today Editor, who has been too busy writing about QUANTA recently…

But every other QL user is under suspicion…

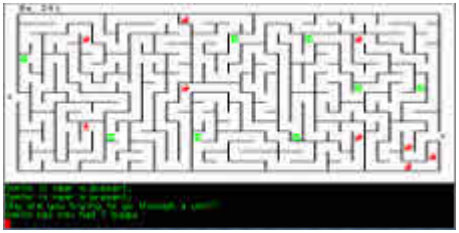
So, you must remove all suspicion from yourself by rescuing Christmas on behalf of all children worldwide. Help guide Santa through the maze, rescue the reindeer, pick up all the gifts and escape from the maze as quickly as possible.

Santa and all children world wide will be eternally grateful if you can save Christmas!

If the number of comments I got from people complaining of the time they wasted over Christmas and the New Year because of this game is anything to go by, it's surely worth a try!

This game, written in SuperBASIC, can be downloaded from:

http://www.dilwyn.me.uk/games/santamaze.zip



**The Santa's Maze game.**

## QUANTA MAGAZINE Page 3

Alert readers may have noticed that the contents list in the previous issue was not in the usual place. Readers who were even more alert may have noticed that some, err, interesting pictures crept in on page 3. Ironically, in the same issue, our beloved long-term "acting-editor" of recent years announced his retirement from editing the magazine.

The well known editor of another QL magazine "with pages somewhat larger than those of our own" (to quote from a Mischief Maker article in an issue of QUANTA magazine some time back) must have noticed the change to the usual page 3, because he wrote on the ql-users mailing list:

"You will be pleased to know the magazine arrived today.

Mr. Gilpin, can you give me a good reason why I should not write to

the Chief Constable of Greater Manchester asking him to prosecute you for the obscenities on page 3?

I am just grateful the post no longer comes at breakfast time. I could have choked on my muesli!"

Health and Safety matters relating to consumption of muesli while reading the QUANTA magazine apart (we do understand that no serious harm came to QL Today's editor), readers will be pleased to know that the said Mr Gilpin has now been suitably chastised (but only for not including a page 3 like this often enough to take members' minds off their QLs for once!)

## Here's One I Made Earlier…

Lee Privett has been busy filming an iPad. But he has a good excuse, as he writes below:

See: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jzK5xU1BbBw

The iPad with the iDOS app incorporating the DOS BOX emulation (now removed by Apple) running in DOS a program called QLAY which itself emulates the operating system QDOS

You will see from the video that QDOS runs really slow, however that is not the point of the exercise, it's the fact that is does run on a modern day piece of kit (iPad).

The whole thing was filmed in stages using the iPhone and edited together using the iMovie app before uploading to YouTube.

Starting the emulation on the iPad

The familiar QL opening screen.

Because of the various emulations going on the whole boot up sequence takes over 10 minutes so this has been edited down for aesthetic purposes.

## General Election Analysis Program

Somewhat belatedly Just Words! has released the 2010 version of its General Election analysis program. This time the interactive map had to be completely rewritten and this was done using new plotting techniques to give the most accurate and detailed map yet.

GENERAL ELECTION 2010 gives the results for the main parties in England, Wales and Scotland. There are numerous analytical possibilities and extensive graphics including interactive political maps. It comes in two versions, non pointer QL colour and pointer GD2 colour. The latter requires a minimum screen resolution of 800 x 600 pixels.

The 2005 version of the program has been added to the archive of every UK General Election since 1983.

The program can be downloaded from the Freeware Downloads page of the Just Words! Website:

http://members.multimania.co.uk/geoffwicks/justwords.htm

## Sir Clive On Mastermind

Sir Clive Sinclair appeared on Celebrity Mastermind on BBC1 on 03/01/11, along with fellow contestants Robert Webb, Helen Skelton and Stephen Mangam.

Sir Clive's specialist subject was British Inventions, but sadly he came fourth with only 14 points, having only managed to score 4 points in the first round. Robert Webb finished third, Helen Skelton second (she was ahead after the specialist round with 17 points), and the quiz was won by actor Stephen Mangam with 29 points.

It seems that a YouTuber has uploaded the Clive Sinclair parts of the show to YouTube (for anyone who missed it):

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xuQbU4hVcCc

## Sir Clive In The News – Again

On 11th January, Malcolm Cadman wrote:

"The London free newspaper - Metro - featured Sir Clive Sinclair on Page 17 with an article titled 'Date with history:10/1/85'. Featuring a description and photo of Sir Clive in the C5.

…10/1/2011 being an Anniversary date. Still making the news . :-) "

## More QL Videos On YouTube

Peter Scott has written, to ask me to publish a link to his new QL Video Channel on YouTube. You can watch his QL videos at:

http://www.youtube.com/user/QLPeet

**Sample screen from Peter Scott's YouTube Video Archive.**

## Peter Graf's SD/MMC Card Interface

Peter Graf announced on the QL-users mailing list early in the new year that he was looking at possibilities of producing an SD/MMC card interface for the QL. He emphasised that he could not promise to make the hardware available, but was conducting a quick survey to find out which type people would be most interested in. He wrote:

"What would be your favourite style for an SD/MMC card "hard-disk" for the QL?

**A) External interface, plugs into parallel port of Super Gold Card.**

*Pro:*

- Interface also works on Q40 and Q60.
- QL Case doesn't need to be opened.
- Easy reconnect from one machine to another.
- Hot-plugging might work.
- ROM-Port remains usable.

*Con:*

- Slow data transfer through parallel port handshake lines.

**B) External interface, plugs into QL ROM port.**

*Pro:*

- QL Case doesn't need to be opened.
- Faster data transfer.
- On-board Driver ROM.
- Works on QL without Gold Card / Super Gold Card.

*Con:*

- ROM-Port occupied.
- Complex hardware.

**C) Internal interface, plugs into CPU socket**

*Pro:*

- Fastest data transfer.
- ROM-Port remains usable.

*Con:*

- QL Case needs to be opened.
- Only Gold Card/Super Gold Card machines.

**D) Internal interface, replacing a microdrive(!)**

Can easily be bolted inside the case, after a microdrive was removed. Plugs into CPU socket or maybe another place.

*Pro:*

- SD/MMC-card can be plugged in like a cartridge.
- Looks cool.
- Very "QL-style”.
- ROM-Port remains usable.

*Con:*

- QL Case needs to be opened. “

Peter is interested in hearing your views to find out which of the four options would be preferred by most people, so please contact him at the email address: pgraf@q40.de

## George Gwilt News

My new website address is http://gwiltprogs.info/

The previous address run by ukonline is obsolete.

This contains a recent update of GDLIB which is a library of routines for Assembly programs. The update consists of an improvement in the routine allowing a non PE program to be moved by pressing F9 and following the instructions.

George remarks on his website that “Although the SQLUG site is now operational, new and amended programs will be posted here as well.” SQLUG is the Scottish QL Users Group, whose website can be found at

http://www.jms1.supanet.com/

George Gwilt’s new website is now online.

- which may be handy if you need to download the Turbo compiler files, for example, as that is not (at the time of writing) on George’s new website.

## Richard Alexander

Is anyone still in contact with Richard Alexander, former publisher of the QL Adventurer’s Forum and owner of south Wales QL software publisher CGH Services?

I have been trying to contact him with a view to re-releasing these QL games magazines on CD or DVD, but so far without success. Peter Scott has kindly scanned all 9 issues of these magazines, although at the moment they are only graphical scans so not yet suitable for use as searchable PDF files, for example.

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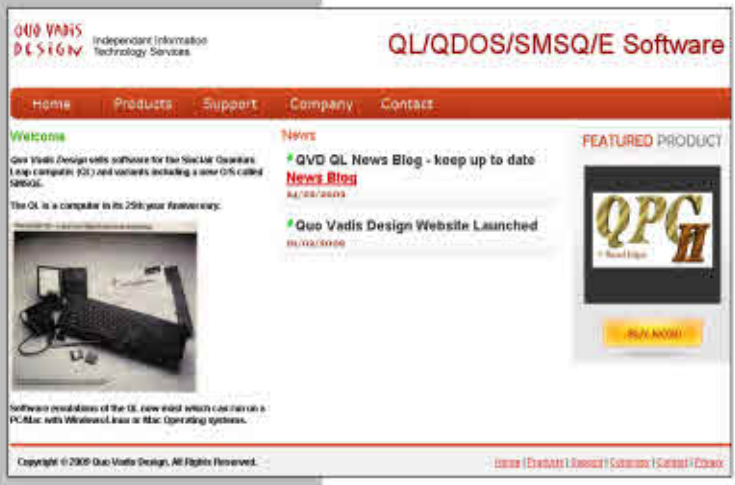


QL/QDOS/SMSQ/E Software

Check the QL News Blog on our website for updates.

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I have been in touch with Bruce Nicholls who kindly gave us permission to reproduce on a non-profit basis the magazines he was in charge of (QL Leisure Review and possibly Q-Review), so if we can contact Richard Alexander to get his permission to distribute the original QL Adventurer's Forum as well, that would be great! Back in DJC days he did give me permission to reproduce (photocopy) the magazines to anyone who wanted them, but sadly that permission came to end with the demise of DJC back in 1994/95.

If anyone knows how to contact Richard Alexander, I would be grateful if you could get in touch with me at:

news@quanta.org.uk

## QL Game Now On iPhone

Daniele Terdina thought that this might be of interest to QL users who used to play the QL game called Mortville Manor back in the 1980s. Daniele writes:

"Some QL users may remember the Mortville Manor game that was available on the QL and other computers.

Looks like a 3D version for iPhone is almost ready:

http://www.mortevielle.com/

(web site is in French, automated English translation at:

http://www.microsofttranslator.com/bv.aspx?ref=Internal&from=fr&to=en&a=http://www.mortevielle.com/)"

## MicroPeripherals Disk Interface Manual

With grateful thanks to Rich Mellor, I have added to my website a PDF file of the manual for the Sinclair/MP disk interface, which might come in handy for anyone who acquires one second hand without a manual. It is quite handy actually, because this interface differs quite a lot from the other QL interfaces in that it does not use the FLP device name, the on-board extensions are not the same as those found in the toolkits in most QL disk interfaces. Plus the interface has some DIP

switches on it, the use of which is not readily apparent without a manual. Download the manual from :

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CHAPTER 1. GETTING STARTED

CHAPTER 2. USING THE SYSTEM

CHAPTER 3. DISCOVERING YOUR UTILITIES DISK

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS
ERROR MESSAGES
ADVANCED PROCEDURES

**A page from the manual**

**The Sinclair/MP disk interface**

http://www.dilwyn.me.uk/docs/manuals/index.html
or
http://www.dilwyn.me.uk/docs/manuals/microP-diskInterface.pdf

## London Sub Group Changes

Malcolm Cadman writes:

" For 2011 we have agreed to move to 8 meetings a year. As follows:

1 - February
2 - March
3 - April
4 - May
5 – June

Break - July and August - Summer

6 September
7 October

8 November

Break - December 2011 and January 2012 - Winter

After all the refurbishment changes, we should also begin to get the benefit of the Venue in 2011. Our next Meeting will be the second Sunday of February 2011 - 13th. “

## Norman Dunbar’s QL Wiki

Norman Dunbar writes (16th January):

”Just a quick note to explain a change to the qdosmsq.dunbar-it.co.uk "Qdos Internals" Wiki.

It was hacked yesterday by someone who registered and created a couple of pages of spam advertising for "free stuff". I have removed the pages and deleted the user in question (he/she/it wasn't one of us!) and removed the spam pages.

I've now had to make a few changes to the Wiki so that when new users register they only have read access. Anyone wishing to make changes will need to request write access until further notice.

You do not need to register to read the contents of the Wiki, only to update.

**Norman Dunbar’s QL Wiki**

Existing users who have had write access until now, STILL have write access. It's only new registrations that are affected.

Sorry about this.

I get an email automagically when a new registration takes place, if I recognise the user's name or email as a trusted person from this list, I'll happily give write access without needing to be prompted."

## Pandora's Box

On 12th December 2010, Urs König opened Pandora's box, and found the remnants of a long lost QL treasure.

Readers of QL Today will already know that Urs wrote about this in the December/January issue of the magazine, but a German QL user (I will spare his blushes by not naming him!) accidentally revealed the story in December.

Basically, a few months before, Urs had gone on holiday in Italy where he met with the organiser of a retro-computing show, and was handed a box containing some motherboards of a long forgotten QL-compatible dream machine! That machine was the ill-fated Sandy Futura. Originally conceived as a "super-QL" computer by Tony Tebby and Sandy (who made the SuperQBoard disk interface for example). A lot of effort had been put into planning this machine and adverts appeared in QL magazines listing its specifications at the time. For various reasons, the machines probably never made it into production (or if they did not many got sold). Rumour at the time was that the main machine had been withdrawn, but there were

**Urs König's Pandora's Box**

intentions to proceed with a plug-in QL emulator board for the PC instead, probably a similar concept to a QXL card. If anyone has further details of this I'd love to hear from you!

Urs hopes that one day he might be able to repopulate the boards to get what he called his "1986 dream machine" up and running one day. In the meantime, he has made a video of all this and it can be viewed at:

http://www.qlvsjaguar.homepage.bluewin.ch/QL_FUTURA.html

It can be viewed in both standard and HD (1280x720) resolution. He has also scanned many related magazine articles, adverts, letters and even the original promotional flyer with order form and price list. You can download the documents as a single zip file of 154MB from:

http://www.cowo.ch/downloads/QLT_FUTURA.zip

and the promotional flyer + order form + price list from:

http://www.cowo.ch/downloads/1986-12_Brochure_SANDY_FUTURA_4pages.pdf

to wallow in some nostalgia for what might have been back in 1986!

To give you some idea of what this machine might have been like, it was designed by Tony Tebby and was to be manufactured by Sandy. It was 68000 processor based (with a future option for 68010), with one or two floppy disks, stereo sound, network ports, 20 or 40MB hard disk (a lot then!), extended real window handling, RAM from 512K to 8MB and execution

**A sample of the Futura Files!**

times of 3-10 times that of a standard QL, depending on options chosen, and priced from £500. Go on, I've got your attention now, download the files to read them in detail!

Shortly after writing the above, I got to speak to a *former Sandy employee* who told me that the name "Futura" had been chosen in a competition. The bosses at the time decided the Futura might not be sufficiently profitable, compared to the margins on the QL boards and peripherals they were selling at the time. Only a small number of Futuras ever got into people's hands, he thought "less than 10". Plus, "Video was a problem". In fact it seems that the Futura was never really central to Sandy's efforts at the time – they were apparently far more interested in helping the founders of Miles Gordon Technology develop the SAM Coupe, but that took too long and Sandy backed away, feeling that the time had passed for a "super-Spectrum". Sandy became Power Computing in time and bowed out of the QL scene, having been in its time a market leader in the QL scene, having produced many QL disk interfaces, memory cards and a re-cased QL system called the QXT-640.

## QL With Dongle

Rich Mellor came across quite a rare QL system too. This was an early version PM of the QL, with external dongle card (also sometimes called a Kludge) which contained some of the QL firmware on an external EPROM, and came complete with the original version 1 of the four Psion QL programs and an original version 1 of the QL manual. As the version PM chipset was incomplete, Rich gave it a version AH ROM instead and the QL works despite that lack of board modifications done to later QLs. Rich thinks that this could be a unique QL which is a collector's item and would very much like to hear from anyone who might have a copy of the original version PM ROM. At the time of writing it was listed on:

**The dongled QL mentioned above, picture courtesy of SellMyRetro.**

with a suggested starting bid of £99.99, with the sale due to end at about the middle of February.

## Inform Package For QL

I was recently Informed (if you'll excuse the pun) of a problem with the Infocom and Inform adventure game packages for the QL on the Games page on my website, where the executable file headers had been somehow broken and any attempts to run them on a QL caused a "bad parameter" error as a result.

Luckily, the problem was easy to fix!

The Inform Compiler for QL by Luke Roberts lets you create Infocom-style text adventure games for the QL. The Infocom Routines package lets you play (and cheat!) with infocom v1-v5 games. There's also 3 disks of free games to use with the adventure game interpreter on the same page.

I have issued corrections to the Infocom and Inform packages on the Games page on my website. This is at :

http://www.dilwyn.me.uk/games/index.html

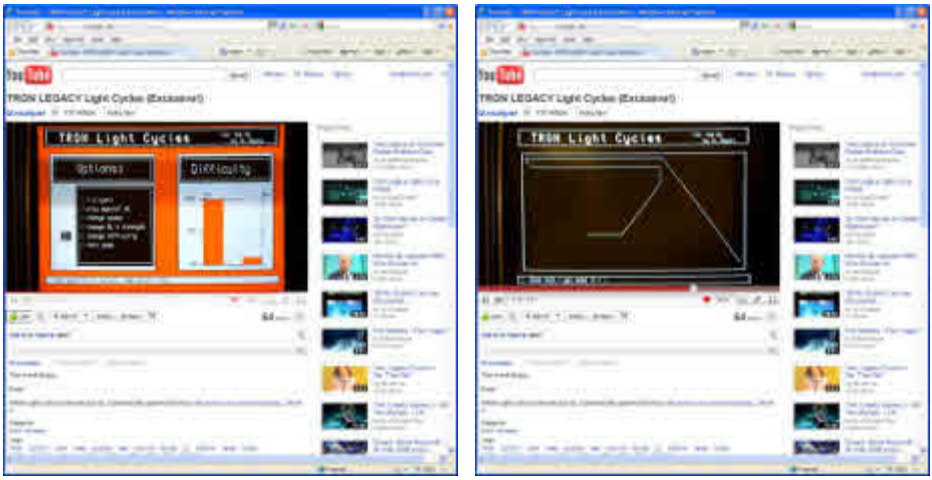
## Tron Legacy

Urs König writes:

"For the first time since the QL went into oblivion (must have been 1986 or so) the industry had mercy with the QL community and the guys in charge let it happen. Walt Dizney (sic.) Productions decided to allow a QL game release with their recent blockbuster motion picture TRON LEGACY 3D, a sequel of their 1982 cult film TRON. The QL game is called TRON Light Cycles. There's a video with a download link on this QL game. URL is:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I_Q0sTLhqKw

The game was written by Martin Neuss in 1986 and is now public domain. The game was first published 1986 in the German magazine 68000er Sonderheft 12/86 as a Datagen program listing (DecLoader).The same year it was added to the public domain (PD) library (CPB) of the




**A couple of sample screens from the games, grabbed from the YouTube website**

German QL user group with the ID F258, first published in issue 20 of their magazine called QUASAR, and now republished by the Sinclair QL Preservation Project (SQPP).

*News Editor's comment: The game loads some 32K screen files to the fixed address of the video screen on a standard QL. This would need to be changed to get it to run on an emulator where the screen does not start at address 131072!*

## WORDBOX

It is with regret that this CD announced in the last issue has had to be temporarily withdrawn, as certain copyright issues came to light with some of the content of the Encyclopedia section. Sorting this out is taking far more time than it should and I have decided to withdraw the CD until I can be certain of clearing this up. In the meantime, I continue to work on adding more programs and general content, so when it is eventually relaunched in a few months it ought to be even bigger and better.

## SINCLAIR FONTS

Thanks to Tim Swenson, I have managed to obtain a True Type font with characters which look like the font Sinclair used for their company logo. This might prove useful to anyone recreating historical documents and so on. The font is called 'SirClive' and is described as 'A tribute to the man who REALLY started home computing'.

TrueType, Type 1 and QL Proforma (e.g. for Line Design) versions are available. There is also a similar font, called SFSquareHead which is similar to, but not quite the same as, the 'SirClive' font. There is also a Spectrum-style font on the same page. If anyone knows of a TrueType font which looks like the QL fonts I would love to be able to add such a font to this collection.

The font is available to download free from the Fonts page on my website

http://www.dilwyn.me.uk/fonts/index.html

## QUANTA HELPLINE — Dilwyn Jones

Members wishing to submit Helpline requests via email can use the email address

helpline@quanta.org.uk

or if you prefer to use traditional post, please send the Helpline request to me via the address printed inside the front cover of the newsletter.

Obviously, we cannot guarantee to answer every query we receive, but we will do our best! Where we have been unable to answer the queries, we may print the help request as an open request in the newsletter to ask if any of the readers can come up with a solution. And, of course, if readers feel that they have a better solution than we came up with, or would like to correct any errors we make, please write to us!

**Q.** What's the difference between SuperBASIC and SBASIC? And S*BASIC? What's that!

**A.** First there was SuperBASIC (the version of QL BASIC on the original QL) and then there was SBASIC when the SMSQ operating system came along. Basically (!) , SBASIC can do everything which the original SuperBASIC could plus a whole lot more. SBASIC has many new commands and functions, and SBASIC also has facilities to access different screen sizes, the GD2 high colour systems so you can use the new colours from BASIC.

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**Annual General Meeting 2.00 pm Prompt Sunday.**

**Venue:** 3rd Davyhulme Scout Headquarters “The Endeavour”, Conway Road, off Lostock Road, Davyhulme, Manchester. M41 0TF. Near M60 J9.

**Full details from Chairman@quanta.org.uk**

SuperBASIC is the term for the BASIC on a QDOS system, while SBASIC is the name for the version of BASIC on an SMSQ or SMSQ/E system (the /E in SMSQ/E meaning it's the version of SMSQ with the Extended Environment, pointer interface etc, built in.)

At some point, some clever person coined the wildcard 'S*BASIC' (the '*' being the wildcard allowing the new term to cover both versions of BASIC for programs which would work on either system).

**Q.** I'd like to convert some Word .doc files to files I can use on a QL. How do I go about that?

**A**. There is no direct way of achieving this, no Word to Quill conversion program was ever written for the QL as far as I know. The closest to it is a program called CATDOC, ported to the QL by Jonathan Hudson. It was originally a Unix program, written by Victor Wagner. Download it from Jonathan's QDOS website at

http://www.daria.co.uk/qdos/

CATDOC can apparently convert Word documents up to the Word 97 versions. If you have documents created in later versions, you may have to try to use the Word facility to save documents in older versions. CATDOC outputs as plain text.

You can of course tell Word to save its documents a plain text. This will lose the layout information, but at least the text itself can be transferred to the QL.

Another way to extract text not just from Word, but also many other files such as PDF files, is to use the Generic Text Printer Driver in Windows. In simple terms, when you print from a program using this printer driver, only the plain text gets through. You'll have to reformat it on a QL to fix margins etc (and possibly convert to the QL character set, depending on whether the text includes any characters such as accented characters which are different between QL programs and Windows programs.

To install the Generic Text Printer Driver in Windows, follow these instructions. This is for the version of Windows used on my PC, Windows XP Pro, it might vary between Windows versions.

From the START menu in Windows, select Printers And Faxes. Double click on Add Printer icon, or go to File menu and click on Add Printer. The Add Printer wizard appears. Click on Next, then select Local Printer. Click Next again, it will spend a while searching for Plug & Play printers, tell you it didn't find any, then you can tell it what type of printer port to use. LPT1 should do for the purposes of this installation. Click on Next again, now you get a screen asking you to select the manufacturer and model of the printer. In the left hand window, scroll down to GENERIC. In the right hand window, select the Generic / Text Only printer model. Follow the prompts for the rest of the installation. Remember NOT to select it as default printer or it will take the place of your normal printer, after all, you'll only want to use it occasionally.

Every time you need to use this driver you'll need to select it as a temporary printer driver – most programs can set this from the File, Print menu, where it shows the name of the default printer and there'll be an option alongside this to select another of the installed drivers.

When you print, it will ask for the name of a file to save the text to – enter a name suitable for transferring to a QL.

**Q.** I am trying to unzip a large zip file on the QL, but it keeps stopping when I get to one particular filename and I can't unzip the rest. How can I get at the other files?

**A.** This is usually down to filename length limits on a QL. Filenames must be 36 characters or less, but this includes any directory name, but not the drive name. The limit is 41 characters if you include the drive name. Where some people come unstuck is forgetting that the length limit includes the directory name. Trying to unzip the Lynx text browser for the QL is a classic example of this. Where the archived file includes stored path names, some care is necessary not to unzip such programs to too long a directory name. If you get the problem mentioned by the questioner above, it might be possible to try unzipping to either a temporary very short directory name on a hard disk (e.g. WIN1_A_) or to the 'root' of a drive such as FLP1_ and try to copy and rename files later to remain within the length limits.

The 36 character limit on filenames comes about because each file has a 64 byte header. Within that 64 byte header, only 36 of the bytes are allocated for the filename, so it is fixed and cannot be extended within the

current filing system. Sadly for us, the directory names are considered as part of the filename in this respect.

If you are running into a similar problem with trying to copy files from a Windows hard disk to a QL emulator, you need to bear in mind that the Windows directory name and filename, though separate and not limited by the same length constraints, is considered by the QL emulator filing system to also have the 36 character directory and filename lengths. There are two ways of working around this:

1. Use as short a directory name in Windows as possible. If this is not practical, e.g. the file is held in the My Documents or similar long path name, create a temporary directory such as C:\QL\ where you can copy files into temporarily ready for transfer, and delete them once the transfer is complete.

2. If using QPC2, where you have the DOS device available, you can work around the 36 character length constraints a little by including as much of the Windows path name as possible into the DOS drive definition. For example, if the files having long filenames are also in a long directory name such as C:\VeryLongDirectoryName\ you can assign a long path to the DOS drive and that part of the path name is not as subject to the 36 character length limit.

   DOS_DRIVE 8,'C:\VeryLongDirectoryName\'

   So, within drive DOS8_ now you can still have pretty long filenames without worrying too much about the name length limit!

**Q.** I have just started using QPC2 and am a bit confused by the range of display sizes. Which is the best size to use?

**A.** The simplest answer is that you should use what's best for your needs. Monitor sizes and resolutions vary greatly and it's hard to recommend a display size without knowing what type of monitor you have, what your graphics card supports, and what you need to do with your QL emulator. My personal preference (I have quite a large wide screen monitor) is to set a QPC2 height which is a multiple of 256 pixels high and multiple of 512 pixels wide. As most QL programs, especially older ones, tend to be designed for a 512x256 display size, it means you can stack them one above the other as long as they allow themselves to be moved around the

display. Where you have old programs stuck in the top left 512x256 corner of the screen, they tend to obscure the BASIC windows, which can be irritating. Fortunately, the SBASIC designers thought of that, and with the new version of the WMON and WTV commands to reset the windows, you can specify where they should be reset to. The new version of WTV and WMON allow an origin to be specified. So, WMON 4,0,256 would try to set mode 4, 256 pixels down the screen, under the “fixed” programs. You can leave out the screen mode number, so WMON ,0,256 for example is quite acceptable. In fact, you may want to add this to your BOOT program if you want the BASIC windows set clear of older programs overlapping in the top left of the display. I prefer to use the ‘windowed’ rather than the ‘full screen’ version of the QPC displays, as it leaves me room to switch between QL and PC programs more easily.

**Q**. I have several programs which won’t run on QPC2. Any suggestions for getting them to run?

**A.** In short, compatibility problems arise when the software writers assume something about a QL setup. This short list covers the majority of issues:

1. QL screen is “always” 512x256 pixels in size.
2. QL screen is “always” at address 131072 (decimal).
3. QL screen is always mode 4 or mode 8 layout.
4. QL system variables are always at address 163840 or just after the screen.
5. Some programs look for a specific routine at a known address in the QL ROM.

By and large, many of the issues can be summarised as programs which PEEK and POKE into “fixed” addresses which are not fixed any more.

By and large, QPC2 can accommodate most of these problems, allowing a surprising degree of compatibility if you know how to “persuade” it. Actually, Marcel Kilgus was aware of these issues when he wrote QPC and went to great lengths to provide ways of working around the limitations of older problems. I’ll go into this in more detail in the graphics articles, but basically:

1. Set QPC2 to start in 512x256 QL colours mode. This forces a QL style memory layout of screen and system variables. Don't try to use the DISP_SIZE 512,256 command to force this, it won't reorganise the memory layout in the same way.

2. Use the QPC_QLSCREMU command (see page 8 of QPC manual, though this may vary between manual versions). This sets up the emulation of an original QL screen and invisibly translates writes to the "old" screen between that emulated screen and the real QPC screen. This might help when you want to run an old game or something which writes direct to the QL display, but probably won't help much with programs which access the system variables, in which case try suggestion 1 above. QPC_QLSCREMU takes a single parameter with 4 options on the parameter value to set how it handles the "old" screen mode. The interesting feature is that even if you are running QPC in high colour modes, it is still able to handle programs writing to a mode 4 or mode 8 screen, as the emulation arranges to convert the colours for you!

a. QPC_QLSCREMU -1: REMark automatic mode
b. QPC_QLSCREMU 0 : REMark disabled, screen conversion off
c. QPC_QLSCREMU 4 : REMark force to mode 4
d. QPC_QLSCREMU 8 : REMark force to mode 8

3. If it's a BASIC program which fails because of PEEKs or POKEs in the system variables, find those PEEKs and POKEs and work out how far into the system variables it's looking. Usually you can work this out by subtracting 163840 from the address where the "assumption" was made, and then changing it to something like this, which works out an offset into the system variables along with something which does the calculation for you, using either the direct and indirect reference version of POKE and PEEK (see SMSQ/E manual page 19, "Peeking and Poking in the System Variables", e.g. PEEK(163886) could be replaced with PEEK(!!163886-163840) or even, using VER$(-2) to find the system variables: PEEK(VER$(-2)+46). All a bit clumsy and messy, but sometimes a comparatively minor change like this can be all that's needed to make the difference between running and not running. And it'll make you look like an expert when you show off your fix to others! (Why work hard when Tony Tebby and Marcel Kilgus make it easier!)

**Q.** I am using FileInfo II and would like to set it up so that a Quill DOC file is loaded into Xchange rather than the original Quill. Is this possible?

**A**. Yes. Start the FileInfo configurator (Fi2Config_obj) and load your current settings. The screen dump below shows the settings required – this assumes that Xchange is stored on Win1_Xchange_.

In case you can't read the vital bit, the command line at the bottom, it should be:

<<pause3s>><<F6>><<ESC>><<F3>>Shwin1_xchange_<<ENTER>>Nqui<<ENTER>>Quil°<<ENTER>><<pause1s>><<F3>>L<<devN_name_ext>><<ENTER>>

This long-winded statement loads win1_xchange_xchange (set in the box above the command line), waits a couple of seconds for it to load (you can change the delay depending on the loading speed of your system), then "presses" F6 to force it back to the initial screen if already running, "presses" Esc to get out of that, "presses" F3, then S for Set command, then H for HELP device which is then set to win1_xchange_, then ENTER to get back to commands menu. Then "press" n (for New) then "qui" for Quill, ENTER, a short pause to allow Quill to start, then in Quill, "press" F3 and L (for load) and the full filename passed and finally ENTER to complete the loading process.

## ZIP AND UNZIP - part 3 — Dilwyn Jones

The first part of this short series should have taught you how to use the Zip and Unzip programs on a fairly basic level.

What you may have gathered by now is that Zip and Unzip are not particularly user friendly - you need to type in cumbersome command lines and remember some obscure command syntax.

Fortunately, there is a better way.

**Archivers Control Panel**

Thierry Godefroy has written an extremely useful and quite simple to use front end program for Zip and other archivers. It's called Archivers Control Panel (ACP for short) and it's free. QL Today intends to include a copy on a cover disk, or you can always get the latest version from most QL PD libraries and many QL-related websites.

Archivers Control Panel is available in both French and English language versions. It requires pointer environment and a slightly modified version of the QLiberator compiler runtime extensions file, called QLIB_RUN336mod, which is supplied with the program. The modification to QLIB_RUN corrects a small problem in the original version.

Archivers Control Panel can make use of the Menu Extension from Jochen Merz, but it can also work without it. It just means the difference between having to type in filenames or selecting them from a menu.

The Archivers Control Panel package consists of just three files:

QLIB_RUN336MOD - the modified version of the QLiberator runtime extensions.

ACP_OBJ - this is the program itself.

ACP_HELP - a help file which can be viewed from within the program, or (since it's a simple plain text file) can be loaded into most editors or printed simply by means of a copy command to send it to the printer:

COPY_N flp1_ACP_HELP TO SER1

or

COPY_N flp1_ACP_HELP TO PAR if you have a printer connected to a PAR parallel port.

Since Archivers Control Panel has a very large range of options and commands, you are strongly advised to read the instructions contained within the ACP_HELP file.

**Setup**

Copy the three Archivers Control Panel files into the required drive and directory on your system. This can be floppy disk such as FLP1_ or a subdirectory on a hard disk such as WIN1_ACP_. In addition to the Archivers Control Panel files, you should also copy into the same place any of the required Archivers programs. For example, if you intend to use Zip and Arc, you should copy the programs called Zip, Unzip and Arc onto the same drive or directory. If you are using the QL Today cover disk, all the required archivers are on that disk, or you can download a file containing the required archivers from Thierry Godefroy's website.

Although it is good practice to include all the archivers (zip, arc, lha, lhq, tar and zoo) just in case you decide at a later date that you need more of these programs than you originally thought. For example, if downloading programs from Thierry Godefroy's website or Tony Firshman's bulletin board, you will find plenty of examples of QL programs there archived with programs other than zip - especially LHA, LHQ and ZOO.

## Configuration

Archivers Control Panel has a level 1 configuration block built in, so that you can preset a whole range of options for the program. These settings are altered with the usual Config program, like most pointer driven programs.

The program can be made aware of the DATA_USE and PROG_USE settings, so it is usually good practice for these to be set to the required directory before you start Archivers Control Panel:

```
PROG_USE FLP1_
DATA_USE FLP1_
EXEC FLP1_ACP_OBJ
```

The rule of thumb is that the right hand files listing window shows the files on the DATA_USE default drive, and the archiving programs are loaded from the PROG_USE default drive.

But before you get as far as starting the program, it is a good idea to run the Config program first to configure the program prior to use.

ACP has several sections in its built in configuration block. Since there are so many items to configure, the author has split them up into groups. Once you become familiar with which section a particular item is in, you can skip whole groups to get to that one.

So execute the Config program and tell it to load the ACP_OBJ program.

At this stage it would be a good idea to read the ACP_HELP help text file for more detail on the configuration process, as it is one of the more complex parts of using Archivers Control Panel.

One of the main things you need to know is that if an at symbol ("@") is placed in front of a filename, that is used to indicate "insert the prog_use default device here. For example, if you want to load the help file ACP_HELP from the PROG_USE default drive, you'd specify its filename as @acp_help

The configuration options are as follows.

The first group of options:

* Name of the help file. This is called ACP_HELP and would normally be in the same directory as the Archiver Control Panel program itself. In common with many configuration options, begin this entry with an @ symbol to indicate it's to be loaded from the PROG_USE default device.

* Default archive path. This is the drive where ACP looks for the zip files, zoo files and so on. Leave it empty and it will look on the DATA_USE default drive.

* Current directory. This is the drive where files are compressed from and to. Leave it empty for the program to use the DATA_USE default.

* Temporary files directory. Programs like Zip need to create some temporary files somewhere. You can either specify a specific drive such as RAM1_, or leave it empty and it'll use the DATA_USE drive.

* Sort filenames in the archive window. This will either give you a sorted list of files in the zipped archive or the files can be displayed in the order in which they already exist in the archive.

* Sort filenames in the Current Directory window. The right hand window in ACP shows a list of files on the drive from which files are compressed and to which files are extracted from an archive. Sometimes it is more convenient to have the list of files sorted than to list them in the order in which they're placed on the drive.

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* Default size for archiver window. This can be BIG or SMALL.

* Keep archiver messages history. This can be YES or NO.

* Use FileInfo II (if present) to "execute" files. This can be YES, NO or QUERY, with QUERY meaning that you are asked before it tries to use FileInfo II to execute a data file. Files like Quill DOC files cannot normally be "executed" with an EXEC or similar command, but if you have the FileInfo II software, it allows you to associate programs with given file types and will try to load that program then load the file into it, e.g. FileInfo II can be taught that to "execute" DOC files, it ought to execute Quill, then drive Quill to load the file indicated.

* Save ACP config into environment variables on exit. This can be YES or NO. Environment variables will be a new subject for many readers - see the Environ_Doc file which goes with the ENV_BIN file on the disk for more details. Use of the environment variables is optional, but if you are a habitual user of environment variables, this can be a useful option.

* Default Archiver. When ACP starts, it highlights which archiving program to use unless you indicate otherwise. I normally set this to ZIP, because 99% of all archives I access are in ZIP file format. It can be any of the six programs ACP knows how to use.

The next section deals with the archiving programs themselves. You are asked to specify details such as the filename and path name for ACP to use to call that particular program. For example, if the program used to decode ARC files is called "ARC" and located in the PROG_USE directory, you may specify @ARC which will in essence result in ACP attempting to load it with a command equivalent to EXEC PROGD$&'ARC'

There's also a few questions specific to some archivers. For example, when ACP is using ZIP or UNZIP, it needs to know if you want them to be dealt with by commands which are InfoZip and InfoUnzip compatible. Older QL versions of Zip and Unzip may not offer full InfoZip compatibility. You will need to specify if the TAR program is to be handled with GNU TAR compatibility (sorry, I don't know what that means!)

You are then asked for the directories containing GZIP, BZIP2 and COMPRESS. If these are on the PROG_USE default drive, just leave these entries blank.

The next section concerns advanced settings for ACP. The first set of questions asks if you want ACP to fix some of the known bugs in some archivers (these are listed in the help file). For example, LHQ does not normally handle the "*" wildcard correctly. It is worth reading this part of the help files, as knowing about these potential shortcomings will help you to resolve problems which may arise from time to time when using these programs.

Finally, this section asks you to specify any advanced options for the individual archivers. Leave these blank until you become more familiar with these programs.

When you have answered all the questions, save the reconfigured copy of ACP. Of course, it is supplied configured to use from FLP1_ so unless you are going to use it from another device you may not need to reconfigure it at all, unless you want to set some of the more specialised features.

## Starting Acp

ACP is started with a simple EXEC command, e.g. EXEC FLP1_ACP_OBJ. This should bring up a screen as shown in figure 1.

Figure 1

Figure 2

## Use

You'll see at this point that it has two sets of four buttons at the top. The smaller ones at the top left of the program are (clockwise from top left):

**MOVE** (the double square symbol). Moves the program display around the screen if the screen is bigger than the ACP display.

**HELP** (question mark symbol). Brings up the help file display, as shown in Figure 2. Here, you can press L to scroll down one line, or P to

scroll down by one page. You can also click on the little icon which is a representation of a page of text with an up arrow. Press ESC to return to the main menu.

Zzz - this icon puts ACP to sleep in the QPAC2 button frame.

To the top right, the second group of four buttons are:

**OPTIONS.** This brings up the Options menu, where you can specify features of individual archivers to use. Note that this menu can vary slightly for the different archivers (the example shown is for when using Zip). It asks you to specify features such as whether the archive generated is a specifically QL-format archive, or more general for better compatibility with the same archivers on other computers. For ARC, setting this option ensures that QL file headers are stored in the archive and restored when extracted from the archive. Resetting this option allows _arc files for other operating systems to be handled. For Zip, this implies Pkzip compatibility, where the filenames stored are limited to the MS-DOS style 8.3 filenames. If handling QL files, it is best to set the QDOS Compatibility option to On. Other icons indicate if the archive created is to store the directory path names of files held in level 2 directories on a QL system. OVERWRITE allows you to specify if a file which already exists in the archive is to be replaced if you try to add a file of the same name as one which is already in the archive. A CONFIRMATIONS option allows the archiver to overwrite files automatically without asking the user, but applies only to some of the archivers. DISPLAY MESSAGES toggles whether or not the archiving program can display report messages. COMPRESS FILES lets you toggle whether files are compressed or simply stored as they are in the "real" world. For some archivers, the level of compression can be specified - it is possible to get better compression which is slower, or slightly less compression performed faster. The Encrypt Archive option is for Arc (where it controls file encryption) and Zip (where it controls password protected files - don't forget the password or key you specify here or the archive may be lost forever!)

**Figure 3**

**ACTIONS.** With this menu, you can perform given actions on the current archive. For example, click on the Add Files option to add the files selected in the file list window to the current archive. The Delete Files option lets you remove a selected file from the list of files in the current archive.

**Figure 4**

**CONFIGURATION.** As the name implies, this option lets you set certain options for ACP in relation to whichever of the six archivers is currently selected for use. You may prefer to leave these alone at first, until you become more familiar with the various elements of ACP and the individual archivers. Just to complicate matters, this menu varies somewhat depending on which archiver program is in use.

**Figure 5**

**TOOLS**. The commands in this menu help you to use Gzip, Bzip2 and Compress on any number of individual files and to split or glue back together a single large file which is split into sections (e.g. large files too big for a single floppy disk). This is rather specialised, so I suggest you leave this alone until you have mastered basic use of ACP and then to read the instructions on using the Tools menu.

Below these small buttons, there is a row of six buttons which specify whether ACP is to use ARC, LHA, LHQ, ZIP, ZOO or TAR archivers. As most archived files on the QL scene seem to use Zip, you are probably

**Figure 6**

better off learning to use ACP with Zip at first, then try out the others as your confidence grows. To change the selected archiver, just click on the name of the one you require.

Below these are another set of four buttons, All, Extract, Add, All. The left hand All button selects all files in the currently selected archive, and the right hand All selects all files displayed in the directory window. Clicking on the same icon a second time reverses the action - if all filenames were selected originally, all are deselected.

The two short and wide windows hold the name of the current archive (e.g. a _zip file) in the left hand box, while the right hand box shows the name of the current drive and directory. Clicking on one of these boxes brings up the usual file selection menu if you have the Jochen Merz Menu Extension (a file called MENU_REXT), or simply asks you to manually type in a filename in one of the boxes if not.

The two large black windows at the bottom are used for showing a list of filenames. The left hand window shows what's contained in the archive, while the right hand window shows the filenames in the currently selected drive and directory. The operation of these two windows is quite simple - files from the right hand window can be compressed into the archive file shown on the left. For example, if you are adding files from FLP1_ into a zip file called RAM1_TEST_ZIP in RAM1_, the left hand box would show a list of files in RAM1_TEST_ZIP and the right hand box would show the list of files on FLP1_. The display is the same whether you are adding files into an archive, or extracting files out of the archive file.

Selection of files is easy - just click on the names of the files required. You should use the left button on a mouse, or SPACE if using the keyboard. Look at the diagram in Figure 1 - we are working with an archive called win1_archivers_ARC_ZIP in the left hand window, and the QL Today cover disk in FLP1_ shown in the right hand window. Suppose we wish to add the boot program into ARC_ZIP - we would just click on the "boot" filename in the right hand window, then click on the Add button to send a copy of "boot" into ARC_ZIP. Multiple files can be selected - try clicking on "boot", "acp_help" and "acp_obj" and send copies of all three into the archive. If you do the same thing twice, depending on configuration options which have been set up, the archiver will either overwrite the original, query whether to overwrite, or perhaps create a duplicate entry in the archive, which is not always useful of course.

To extract files from an archive, just click on the names of the files to extract and click on the Extract button which will decompress the files and send them to the drive and/or directory indicated on the right hand side. Some archivers can be set to delete files as they are extracted - thankfully, Zip does not normally do this, as it is all too easy to lose files by careless mistakes when learning to use these programs!

To view a file in the right hand window, just select the names of all files to view, then click on a filename by pressing the right mouse button (or ENTER if using the keyboard). This will ask if you wish to process the files with File Info II. Reply Yes or No - if you reply with N it will try to view the file with its own built in text file viewer.

To view a file from the archive in the left hand window, just select the name and it will try to display that file in its built in text viewer. Trying to view an executable program will normally show all sorts of rubbish characters on screen, although it can be useful sometimes if you are unsure of the content of a file from its name.

And that's really all there is to using ACP at a basic level. Just remember to select the right program from the list of six, select the archive file in the left hand window, and the drive to which or from which files are to be archived from or de-archived to, select the files required then click on Extract or Add as required.

## Unzip Librarian

This is a much more basic affair than ACP, but it still has its uses for those who are rather put off by the sometimes bewildering number of options and raw power of ACP.

As its name implies, it is purely intended to be used with Unzip and Unzip. It makes no use of extended options on Unzip, its purpose is simply to simplify unzipping files.

It's available in two versions, one for pointer environment users, called ULIB_OBJ, and a pointer driven version called ULIB_PTR_OBJ. Those versions have no compiler runtimes included, so versions with names ending in RTM are slightly longer, but have the compiler runtime extensions built in.

## Pointer Version

See Figure 7. This has a list of drive names across the top, and a list of buttons 1 to 8 for selection of drive numbers. The <- icon lets you go back down one directory level on a system which has sub-directories. Alternatively, click on the F2 box to manually type in a drive and directory name. The large window in the centre shows a list of files in the current directory. In this list, click on the name of a zipped file and the files will be unzipped to the drive/directory shown in the F3 box at the bottom. The F4 box contains the location of the unzip program - if yours is on FLP1_ you'd change what's shown to FLP1_ otherwise Unzip Librarian would not be able to find the Unzip program to do the unzipping of files.

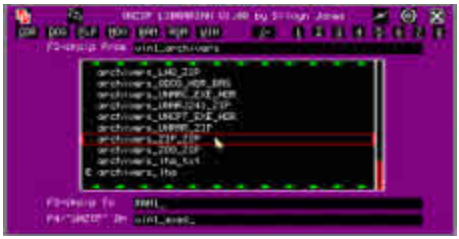


**Figure 7**

## NON-POINTER VERSION

See figure 8 for a screen dump from this version of the program. The controls are very similar - press F1 to specify where the Unzip program is stored on your system, F2 to enter the name of the drive and directory where the zipped file is stored, and F3 to enter where to unzip the stored file to. Press F5 to force a read of the selected location. <- lets you go back down one directory level. Pressing F4 redraws the display if required.

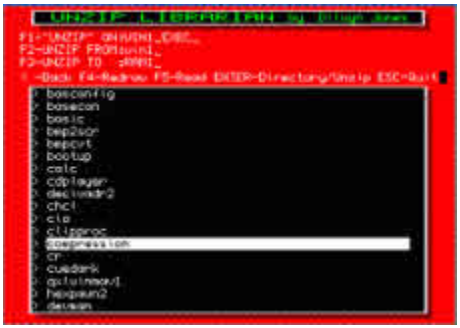


**Figure 8**

In the files window, select the zip file required and press ENTER on its filename. Sub-directories are indicated by a '>' character before the name - press ENTER on a sub-directory name to enter that directory.

Press ENTER on the filename of the zipped file and the decompression process begins.

**Next issue**: In the next (and concluding) issue, I'll discuss the use of my Zip Manager program.

## LIBRARY CORNER — Dilwyn Jones

### Ordering Programs From The Library

For a full guide to ordering programs from the QUANTA Library, please refer to Section C of your QUANTA Member's Guide. If you haven't got a copy, or have mislaid it, you can view it online. Just go to

www.quanta.org.uk

click on the 'Members Guide (PDF)' link in the blue link boxes on the left.

A list of the programs in the library is contained in the Library Guide, which is already available to download from the QUANTA website at the URL

http://www.quanta.org.uk/index.php?id=44

If you only want to order a small number of disks from the Library, and are able to accept them as zipped files over emails, it is actually easier and cheaper for me to send them over the email system to you. It saves the cost of postage (especially for members abroad) and means you get the disks sooner than through the post. The only delay will be while I check with the membership secretary to confirm you are a member.

Obviously, if you want many disks, it may become more practical for you to contact me first to check – in other words, revert to Plan A by reading Section C of your Member's Guide.

In time, when we have completed work on the Members Area of the QUANTA website, it will be possible for members to download disks directly

from the website, but until then, sending disks as email attachments might be the best way forward for most members, especially those abroad.

## Library Disk ML01

I have kept this disk up to date with listings published in QUANTA magazine from about October 2005. While the disk contains mostly listings by Steve Poole (who has in the past given permission for these to be available through the website), it also contains other listings too long for all but the most patient to type in! A quick look at the readme file on the disk shows that the readme file runs to about 5 pages – quite a lot of listings from the last 5 years to play with!

Unfortunately, not all of these listings can be made public like Steve's, so cannot be put in the public area of the website. I'll have to be patient and wait for the members' area to be ready before I can put them all on the QUANTA website for members. But do remember that if all you want is one or two disks such as this one, it might be easiest to request them from me by email as zipped files (to practise using Zip and Unzip after my articles in the magazine!)

## Library Disk SP58

Just Words! has sent QUANTA the 2010 version of its General Election analysis program. Geoff Wicks says that "This time the interactive map had to be completely rewritten and this was done using new plotting techniques to give the most accurate and detailed map yet."

General Election is a program for analysing the 2010 election result. It contains the full results of the election for the main parties in in England, Wales and Scotland, which can by examined by constituency, region or party. The program has extensive graphics, including interactive political maps. It is possible to enter the results of almost any opinion poll or by-election result and predict the seats that each party would win.

Two versions of the program are available, a standard non pointer QL version and a pointer driven high resolution GD2 colour version. The latter requires a minimum screen resolution of 800x600 pixels.

The older versions remain available in the library, on disks SP06, SP54 and SP55. You can also download an archive of all the older versions from the Freeware Downloads page of the Just Words! Website:

http://members.multimania.co.uk/geoffwicks/justwords.htm

## Notes On Psion's QL Archive

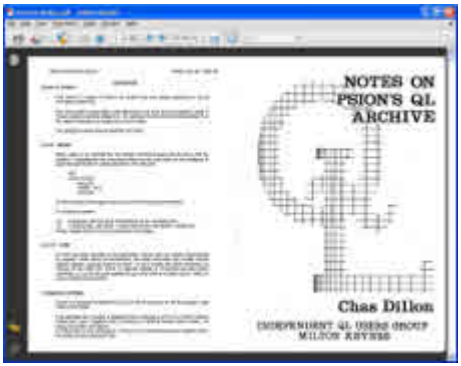
In response to a member's request to find a copy of this 52 page booklet about Archive by Chas Dillon, published in the early years of QUANTA's existence, John Gilpin has been able to acquire a copy of this publication and has scanned it as a PDF file.

While the booklet is clearly quite old by now, it may still prove to be a very useful and instructive document for Archive users.

I will add this to the Library, although at the time of writing I don't yet know which disk it will appear on.

Until then, if anyone would like a copy of this document, please request it from me by email to:

librarian@qunta.org.uk




**The "Notes On Psion's QL Archive" booklet by Chas Dillon**

## VIRUS ATTACK ARTICLE — Steve Poole

Steve Poole has sent in a modification to his article "Virus Attack" in last month's issue of QUANTA, page 34.

Paragraph 5 on page 36 should read as follows:

As an example, the simplest routine is just one instruction MOV i+1, j+1 (where i and j are the lines to move from and to) which advances through memory copying itself progressively as it does so, like a steamroller.

# SUBGROUP MEETINGS

### THE WEST MIDLANDS QL USER GROUP

There has been a change of venue, brought about by the owners of the Queens Head pub changing it from a straight pub into an eatery. The new meeting place is called the Bull, the address is 1 Price Street, Birmingham, B4 6JU. Approx 7 minutes walk from Snow Hill main-line railway station and has ample street parking nearby. Meetings remain open to QUANTA members and non-members alike.

After your first meeting you're expected to pay £1 each time towards the organisation and monthly newsletter costs - except once a year when the group pays all those who attend a pound instead ;-)

We provide food twice a year for those who attend the AGM and the group's birthday party) and at meetings we discuss all sorts of things, QL-related and otherwise, usually from about 8:20pm onwards till 10:30 or later. The group owns QL hardware, a disk library and subscribes to relevant magazines. People can join the mailing list for £3.50 per year, even if they can't attend regularly.

**Meetings :** Meetings are usually on the first and third Monday of each month (but not on bank holidays unless the previous one was cancelled for that reason).

**Contact :** The contact number remains Mike Bedford White's, on 0121 605 4438, anytime after 11am.

Email: mikebwhite@blueyonder.co.uk

### QUANTA DORSET SUBGROUP - Dorset

Meetings are held, on the second Sunday of each month between 2.00pm and 5.00pm.

For location please contact:- John Penn-Simkins or John Mason.
John Penn-Simkins 01202 422491 or John Mason 01425 275894

## LONDON QL AND QUANTA GROUP

Meetings are held in the School Room, which is the basement of the Borough Welsh Congregational Chapel, 90, Southwark Bridge Road, London SE1. This is almost opposite the junction with Marshalsea Road, at the other end of which, 5 minutes walk away, is the Borough Underground Station. Free parking is easily available in Southwark Bridge Road for road users, Cyclists are welcome.

Members currently each pay a subscription of £40 per year towards the cost of the hire of the hall and a small additional charge is made for tea/coffee - biscuits are then provided free.

Please bring your QL equipment if possible, all types welcome, e.g., PC portable running emulators. The Group has some systems stored at the venue for its use. In addition, there are lots of donated second user equipment, books, magazines, etc, available for purchase.

Time: 2.00 pm. to 5.00 pm., on the second Sunday of the month. No meetings are held in December / January - winter break, or July / August - summer break, giving 8 meetings a year.

Malcolm Cadman: Tel: 020 8691 5780

email: QL@mcad.demon.co.uk

## NEMQLUG - THE NORTH EAST MANCHESTER QL USER GROUP

Meetings are held at 181, Urmston Lane, Stretford, Manchester. M32 9EH (Near Junction 7 of M60 Motorway - Was Junction 7 M63 Motorway). Our informal meetings start at 7 p.m. and finish at 11 pm. All welcome.

Meets on the last Thursday of each month (except December).

John/Sarah Gilpin 0161-865 2872 (thegilpins@btopenworld.com)

## SCOTTISH QL USERS GROUP

SQLUG meets at George Gwilt's home every second Sunday in the month. Please contact George Gwilt before coming to get the location.

Gdggler@gmail.com

## SOLENT SUBGROUP

Meets at Botley Market Hall, all welcome. Park at the back and use side entrance.

1st Saturday of the month from 2.00 pm to 6.00 pm.

Graham Evans, Tel: 023 8040 3350.

## SURREY QUANTA SUBGROUP (SQSG)

The group is currently trying other venues in the Leatherhead - Epsom area. If you plan to attend but do not get our emails, please phone or email Ken Bain for the latest location.

Meetings are 8.00 to 10.00 pm. On the last Wednesday of each month except December.

Ken Bain - 01932 - 347 432 (to midnight), kenb@bcs.org.uk

## SUSSEX QL USER GROUP

Currently without a meeting place, anyone interested should contact Keith Mitchell or Roy Wood.

Roy Wood, 01273 430501 or Keith Mitchell, 01903 742263.

# QUANTA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2011

## NOTICE CONVENING
## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2011

Notice is hereby given that the twenty-seventh Annual General meeting of QUANTA will be held at 3rd Davyhulme Scout Headquarters, "The Endeavour", Conway Road, Davyhulme, Manchester, M41 0TF, near M60 J9 on Sunday 17th April 2011 at 2.00 pm for the following purposes:

1. **To receive the Annual Report of the Committee.**
2. **To receive the Annual Accounts and Auditor's Report.**
3. **To receive the Membership Secretary's Report.**
4. **To elect members of the Committee.**
5. **To appoint an Auditor and authorise the Committee to fix his/her remuneration.**
6. **To put to the members a change to the Membership Subscription rate.**
7. **To put to the members a proposal that the Constitution should be re-written and be presented for approval to the members at the Annual General Meeting in 2012.**

All reports and proxy forms and any other information will be in the additional issue of QUANTA Magazine in March